

What's hot in IT - An Indian Perspective (Jan-Feb 2019)



Prof. S. Sadagopan
Director, IIIT-Bangalore
ss@iiitb.ac.in

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Universities, Science & Technology and Policy

- **IIT-Delhi** announces **500 PhD Fellowships for International students** from the academic year 2019-20, a game changer initiative of the Indian higher education system
- **Prime Minister** dedicates **IIT-Dharwad** and **IIIT-Dharwad** to the Nation on February 10, 2019
- German auto components biggie **Bosch** funds an **AI Research Center in IIT Madras** with planned investments of Rs 20 Crores on February 6, 2019
- **ISRO** unveils "**Human Space Flight Center**" in Bangalore on February 1, 2019; 31st communication satellite **GSAT 31** launched from France on February 6, 2019
- Considering the fact that Government's "**Angel Tax**" continued to bother **start-up** community in India, the tax exemption cap was hiked to Rs 25 Crores and the effective time was increased to 10 years, in February 2019
- The new **policy on e-Commerce** for firms kicks in from February 1, 2019
- **TRAI** norms for **broadcast TV channel pricing** comes into effect from February 1, 2019; expected to save money for hundreds of millions of TV consumers
- **Union Government** presents its **Vote on Account** on February 1, 2019; acting **Finance Minister Piyush Goyal** (Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is away in USA on medical grounds) creates history – the first finance minister who is a formally trained accountant (in fact the national topper in his batch) - does a fine balance between fiscal discipline and populism

Products

- **MWC 2019 (February 25 - 28)** had many products particularly smartphones that "fold" from **LG** (Dual Screen) and **Huawei** (Mate X) - in addition to **Samsung** "Fold" - **5G** was the dominant theme
- **Samsung** launched its revolutionary phone with foldable display **Samsung Galaxy Fold** on February 20, 2019 at Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, the place where Steve Jobs launched Apple II way back in 1977

Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** posts good results on January 10, 2019, with the highest-ever **quarterly profit Rs 8,105 Crores**

MNC IT Companies in India

- In February 2019, French major **Thales** launches its R & D Center in Bangalore
- **Hero Chip Design facility** was launched in Bangalore on February 20, 2019
- **Samsung** R & D Institute signs up for another 4,00,000 sq. ft. space in Bangalore on February 16, 2019
- **Amazon & Wal-Mart** lose \$ 50 Billion in market-capitalization in early February 2019, partly impacted by the Indian e-Commerce rule kicking in on February 1, 2019; Amazon license gets restored on February 6, 2019

People

- Prime Minister **Modi** receives **Seoul Peace Prize** on February 23, 2019
- IIT-KGP Alumnus and IITB faculty Dr **Subasis Chaudhury** named **IIT - Bombay Director**; to take charge on April 15, 2019
- February 2019 saw **Sriram Raghavan of IBM Research (India)** moving to USA to lead AI Research in NYC

- India-educated BITS-Pilani alumnus Ms **Revathi Advaiti** was named **Flex** (earlier Flextronics) **CEO** on February 11, 2019
- **CTS CEO Francisco D'Souza** steps down after 12 years of glorious innings (CTS revenue saw top-line growing from \$ 1.42 Billion in 2006 to \$ 16.1 Billion in 2018); settles a long-pending dispute with US Regulator Securities & Exchange Commission for \$ 25 Million on February 15, 2019
- **Mukesh Ambani** (with \$ 54 Billion) in global **Top 10 in Global Rich** list of Hurun (February 27, 2019), for the first time; **Bill Gates** is **No 2** with \$ 96 Billion and **Bezos of Amazon tops** the list with \$ 147 Billion. Interestingly, 2470 individuals account for 12% of global GDP, demonstrating the concentration of wealth among the top

Start-up Scene

- **Intel** acquires Hyderabad-based start-up **Ineda** – a silicon and platform services provider in the graphics arena for GPU - on February 18, 2019
- India's hotel room aggregator start-up **Oyo** enters US market in February 2019
- **Swiggy** (food delivery company) acquired AI-startup **Kint.io** on February 4, 2019

Interesting numbers

- India's **IP Index rank** moved from 44 to 36 in the year 2018, as per US Department of Commerce Report; the largest jump in the year across all countries
- **GST collections** in February 2019 sees a marginal drop (Rs 97,247 Crores)
- India's Central Bank **RBI** cuts "repo rate" by 25 basis points on February 7, 2019
- **Akshaya Patra** mid-day meal program among School students in India (run by ISKCON) touches 3 Billion mark on February 11, 2019; starting with 1,500 children in 2000, it crossed the 1 Billion milestone in 2012 and the 2 Billion milestone on 2016
- **Government of India** increases **DA by 3%** (from 9% to 12%) effective January 1, 2019 on February 19, 2019
- **Tata Motors** posts a record loss of Rs 27,000 Crores for the October – December 2018 quarter; the largest ever loss for any Indian company in the corporate history of India!

General

- India's **National War Memorial** (built over 2017 to 2019) was launched in New Delhi near India Gate on February 25, 2019
- **Indian Railways'** Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai built **Vande Bharat** Express train commissioned on Delhi – Varanasi route on February 17, 2019; it starts a new era in high-speed train travel in India
- **Bangalore Airport** commissions its 3.4 MW **solar plant** on February 6, 2019
- In early February 2019, **Airbus** decides to stop production of its iconic jumbo aircraft "**Airbus 380**" from 2021
- **US President Trump** declares **local emergency** to press through his demand for billions of dollars for the planned Mexico Wall on February 15, 2019
- A major forest fire destroys 6,000 acres of forest land in Bandipur, Karnataka during February 22 - 26, 2019; 300 cars gutted during Bangalore Aero Show on February 23, 2019
- Terrorists with Pakistan support kill 40 Central Reserve Police personnel in **Pulwamain** Kashmir on February 14, 2019; India conducts **Surgical Strike 2.0** and kill 300 terrorists in a terror camp by flying planes 70 Km into Pakistan territory in a sophisticated and swift 21-minute operation in the wee hours of February 26, 2019; in turn, it leads to loss of Indian Air Force Pilot Abhinandan Varthaman; luckily, Pakistan released him and Abhinandan reaches India back on March 1, 2019 after 60 hours of captivity

January 2019

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- **JEE Mains 2019** held in January 2019 by National Testing Agency in online mode spread over January 9, 10, 11 & 12; results declared on January 19, 2019 (10 days ahead of time); nearly 10 Lakhs took the exam; one more attempt available for students in April 2019
- **Drone Policy 2.0** enters Draft stage and ready for comments on January 15, 2019
- **Doordarshan Science channel** launched on January 15, 2019 by DST Secretary & S&T Minister
- Micro-satellite "**KalamSat**" weighing little over 1 Kg (designed by students with guidance from NGO SpaceKidz India) was put in orbit by **ISRO** on January 24, 2019

- **PhD students' stipend** amounts increased from Rs 25,000 to Rs 31,000 by Government of India on January 31, 2019
- **AICTE** cuts 40,000 engineering seats and decides not to give permission for new engineering colleges for 2 years, on January 31, 2019
- **600 Indian students "trapped"** in USA by fake university created by INS in January 2019

Products

- **CES 2019 (Jan 7 - 10)** had many products show-cased, but nothing spectacular

Markets

- **Byju's**, Bangalore-based learning solutions company acquires US-based learning games company **Osmo** for \$ 20 million on January 16, 2019
- Bangalore-based analytics firm **Fractal** gets \$ 200 Million capital infusion from **Apax** on January 16, 2019
- **Bain Capital** acquires majority stake in **Brillio** (Bangalore-based and Santa Clara headquartered) analytics / digital company on January 15, 2019
- **Apple** revises quarterly revenue target downward from \$ 89 Billion to \$ 84 Billion on January 2, 2019, the first ever in 15 years, and its stock price falls by 7% on the very first day of trading in 2019
- **Indian start-ups** raise \$ 38.3 Billion in 2018 (LiveMint January 3, 2019)

Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** posts good results on January 10, 2019, with the highest-ever **quarterly profit Rs 8,105 Crores**; its Brand value takes it to global No 3 (next only to Accenture & IBM) as per Brand Finance Report of January 23, 2019; makes 30,000 offers in 2018-19 season (up from 20,000+ last year)
- **Infosys** posts good quarterly results on January 11, 2019; important, considering the fact that the **new CEO Salil Parekh** just completed a year on January 2, 2019; bags Rs 4,241 Crores Income Tax order on January 16, 2019; its **Verizon** contract value goes up from \$ 750 Million to 1 Billion in January 2019
- **Wipro** quarterly (Oct – Dec) profits jump 30%; quarterly revenue crosses \$ 2 Billion

MNC IT Companies in India

- With 9,100 **patents** in 2018 (with more than 4,000 patents in AI), **IBM** continues its record of holding the No 1 position for 26 years; interestingly, 800 of them were from IBM India, the largest for IBM outside USA
- **Volkswagen** starts India Tech Centre in Pune on January 19, 2019
- **SAP India** to see 400+ **layoffs** (part of 4,400 planned layoff globally) in January 2019

People

- Computer scientist **Dr Subhash Kak**, **ISRO** scientist (who was wrongly punished accused of terrorist link) **Dr Nambi Narayan**, **Cisco** Chairman **John Chambers**, **Adobe** CEO **Santanu Narain** and **L&T** Chairman **AM Naik** are part of Padma awards 2019
- **Vinod Kumar Yadav** is the new **Railway Board Chairman** (effective January 1, 2019), heading the organization with nearly 1.5 Million staff
- **Intel** names Interim CEO **Bob Swan** as **permanent CEO** on January 31, 2019

Start-up Scene

- **MilkBasket** starts Bangalore operations on January 15, 2019
- **Byju's**, Bangalore-based learning solutions company acquires US-based learning games company **Osmo** for \$ 120 million on January 16, 2019
- Bangalore-based analytics firm **Fractal** gets \$ 200 Million capital infusion from **Apax** on January 16, 2019
- **Bain Capital** acquires majority stake in **Brillio** (Bangalore-based and Santa Clara headquartered) analytics / digital company on January 15, 2019
- Online car trading start-up **CarDekho** raises \$ 110 Million on January 3, 2019

Interesting Application & Apps

- Finance Ministry's "ITR Filing 2.0" order of Rs 4,241 Crores goes to **Infosys** on January 16, 2019
- **Finance Ministry** starts an interesting **Budget Series** on **Twitter** (January 15 to February 1)

Interesting numbers

- **RIL** posts Rs 10,251 Crores profit for October – December 2018 quarter, the first private enterprise to cross Rs 10,000 quarterly profit; for the same period, **TCS** posts Rs. 8,105 Crores profit, the highest ever
- **ModiCare (Aayushman Bharat)** treats 6,85,000 patients free of cost in the first 100 days

General

- **Tata** brand reaches the global **Top 100** (the only entry from India) in January 2019
- **UK Prime Minister** loses "Brexit poll" but narrowly wins "confidence vote" in January 2019
- JLL Survey puts **Bangalore as No 1** in the list of "Most Dynamic Cities" (2019 Edition of City Momentum)
- **GST** doubled the exemption limits for MSME's (from Rs 20 Lakhs to Rs 40 Lakhs per year) on January 10, 2019
- Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj (erstwhile Allahabad) starts at 4 AM on January 15, 2019; 150 million visitors expected over 2 months (Jan 15 (Sankranti) to March 6 (Mahashivratri)); 800 special trains, 50,000-strong security force, 220 KM of road, thousands of doctors, hundreds of tents, 4000 Wi-Fi hotspots and 1,20,000 toilets Kumbh Mela 2019 is spectacular in every respect
- US Government shut-down that started on December 22, 2018 continued for the longest time till January 25, 2019
- **CES 2019** (January 8 – 11, 2019) at Las Vegas show-cased many exciting products; however, most of them including LG foldable TV's were incremental, rather than breakthrough innovations
- **620 Km long human chain** from Kasrgod to Thiruvananthapuram with 3.5 Million participants create history in Kerala on January 1, 2019
- Government introduces Constitutional Amendment (103 Amendment 2019) "**quota for economically backward people**" on January 9, 2019; it is passed in both the Houses (Parliament & Rajya Sabha) and with Presidential nod on January 12, 2019 becomes a law, one of the fastest legislation in Indian Parliamentary history
- **CBI Chief Alok Varma** is reinstated and transferred; but, he decides to retire; all within days, unfortunate developments for the country

About the author: Professor Sowmyanarayanan Sadagopan (ss@iiitb.ac.in) is the Director of IIIT-Bangalore. These are his personal views. He has been writing on "What's Hot in IT" from an Indian perspective continuously from 1997; Times of India, Financial Express, IT Magazine carried the monthly (and yearly columns) till 2016; IEEE India has been carrying the quarterly columns since 2017

